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Conventions Hold Varried Fare

By PHILIP H. DOGHERTY

Advertising industry conventions, although tough on the liver, appear to be designed to refresh the participants both physically and intellectually.

They are always held at resorts with ample facilities for golf and tennis tournaments and they always include on their programs speakers whose remarks may expand the mind—providing a bigger picture than the nitty gritty of the business.

So, besides those participants who were strictly business at the just-ended annual meeting of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, the program also included Steven Muller, president of Johns Hopkins University; Eliot Janeway, who said he was a historian and not an economist, and Patricia Carbine, editor and publisher of Ms. magazine.

Bullet . . . Also, Peter G. Petersen, former Secretary of Commerce; Urie Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University; Vernon E. Jordan Jr., executive director of the Urban League, and John Scali, Ambassador to the United Nations.

Not that all of them ignored the agency business altogether. Mr. Jordan, in fact, having remarked on the absence of blacks in his audience, urged the agency executives to double their hiring of blacks "at every level, from the board on down," and to "double industry expenditures in black media in the coming year, as a first step toward treating the black communications industry with the same respect and concern shown the white media."

On the last day of the three-day meeting, John Elliott Jr., chairman of Ogilvy & Mather International, took a look backward instead of forward as all the other speakers were doing.

He looked back to the Depression for some reassuring facets for these present times of trial. Despite advertisers placing smaller ads and fre-



William E. Brennan



John Elliott Jr.



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

quently being difficult about paying up, he noted, agencies then generally overcame the problems of Depression.

Agencies also reduced personnel (much as they have done for the last several years) but salaries went up 15 per cent from 1929 to 1932. And from 1929 to the bottom of the Depression in 1933, advertising as a percentage of national income remained 2.8 per cent with no drop.

One of the convention speakers who did address himself to the nitty gritty was William E. Brennan, president of Main Street Retail Advertising, a subsidiary of Grey Advertising.

He advised his audience, "You'll need some very special people (a different breed of cat) to successfully pitch, acquire and serve a retail client."

He had already observed that retail budgets were increasing faster (9 per cent a year) than national ad budgets (5 per cent a year).

Mr. Brennan, who elaborated on the special abilities an agency must have before trying to make profits from retail account, then became the only speaker—to paraphrase Shakespeare.

"This above all," he said in part, "Immersed be, with all thy sturdy band, In Retail Land, give o'er thy heart and soul And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then go poor amongst the stores."

for good sales.

And good night, Polonius, wherever you are.

A. & P. to McCann

And speaking of retail, the Great Atlantic and Pacific Company, after a two-month search, yesterday assigned its advertising account to McCann-Erickson. It reports that its current national advertising budget is about \$8-million.

A. & P. says it was looking for a large agency that was close to its corporate headquarters in Montvale, N.J.

The finalists were Robert H. Block, Inc., Milwaukee, and Isidore, Lpfkowitz, Elgort, which both were the incumbents; Cunningham & Walsh, and the Bloom Agency in Dallas. The Block shop was full service, and I.L.E. did the creative work.

Navy Seeks Agency

Now that the Army has decided to stay with N.W. Ayer ABH International for its recruiting advertising, the spotlight turns to the agency search of its sister-service, the Navy.

According to a Navy spokesman, the decision should be made by mid-May. Grey Advertising has had the account since July, 1971, and the total advertising budget for fiscal year 1975 is \$16-million.

In other account news, Glenbrook Laboratories, a Sterling Drug division, has given Lois Holland Callaway, already its agency for Glenbrook-Vanquish analgesic, Midol deodorant spray and Breacol decongestant cough fourth assignment. It is Haley's M-O laxative-lubricant.